Application No.: 09/960673   Docket No.: SMQ-076/P6310

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of network storage in a network with a plurality of storage locations having attributes,- the method comprising the steps of:

    providing a software facility in communication over the network with the plurality of storage locations, the software facility identifying and allocating the storage locations to a storage owner based on at least one of the attribute attributes of the storage locations;

    receiving with the software facility a network storage policy from an authorized user, the authorized user having authority to control access to the storage locations on the network, the storage policy including attribute requirements for at least one of said the storage locations; and

    programmatically applying the storage policy to storage decisions on the network using the software facility, the storage decisions determining where data on the network is stored.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said the authorized user selects said the storage location attributes in said the network policy from a list of storage location attributes.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, comprising the further step of:

    configuring a new storage location from at least two of the plurality of storage locations in order to provide specified attributes pursuant to said the network storage policy.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein a storage location is allocated based on matching a requested storage location attribute with a storage location attribute identified by the software facility.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein a selected one of said the storage locations is allocated based on matching a requested storage location attribute with an attribute of a new storage location dynamically configured by said the software facility.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, comprising the further step of:

    placing an unallocated storage location into a pool of storage locations available to said the software facility.

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8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7 comprising the further step of:

placing a storage location into a pool of storage locations marked as previously allocated.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 7 comprising the further step of:

placing a newly discovered unallocated storage location into a pool of storage locations awaiting further action by the software facility, the newly discovered unallocated storage location not having been previously identified by the software facility.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~said~~ the software facility uses the Service Location Protocol (SLP) to identify available devices attached to said network.

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein at least one of the plurality of devices with storage locations thereon is a RAID (Redundant Array of Inexpensive/ Independent Disks) set.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~wherein a storage location with a specified attribute is provided by dynamically configuring a storage location in response to a request from a user of the host electronic device.~~ comprising the further steps of:

providing on the network a host electronic device;

providing a storage location with a specified attribute; and

dynamically configuring a storage location in response to a request from a user of the host electronic device, to provide a storage location with a specified attribute.

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, comprising the further steps of:

setting a network policy for data storage, the policy including storage location attributes requested by an authorized user, the authorized user having authority to make network storage decisions; and

configuring a new storage location from at least two of the plurality of storage locations in order to provide specified attributes pursuant to the network policy.

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14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~said software facility is located on said host electronic device.~~the step of providing the software facility in communication over the network further comprises:

        providing the software facility to be located on a host electronic device, where the host electronic device resides on the network.

15. (Currently Amended) A medium holding computer-executable instructions for a method of network storage in a network with a plurality of storage locations having attributes, the method comprising the steps of:

        providing a software facility communicating over the network with the storage locations, the software facility identifying and allocating the storage locations based on the attributes of the storage locations, ~~said~~ the allocation being ~~the~~ an association of a storage location with an owner, the owner having permission to write data to the storage location and read data from the storage location;

        receiving with the software facility a network storage policy from an authorized user, the authorized user having authority to make storage decisions on the network, the storage policy including attribute requirements for storage locations; and

        programmatically applying the storage policy to storage decisions on the network using the software facility, the storage decisions determining where data on the network is stored.

16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 wherein ~~said~~ the authorized user selects said storage location attributes in ~~said~~ the network policy from a list of storage location attributes.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15, comprising the further step of:

        automatically configuring storage locations to provide specified attributes pursuant to ~~said~~ the network storage policy.

18-21. (Cancelled)

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